TANJAVUR MARATHI INSCRIPTION (WORD-LEVEL ANALYSIS)

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I

The Marathi inscription on the *prakar* walls of the *Bṛhadīśwara* temple at Tanjavur in Tamil Nadu was carved in 1803 during the time of Raja Sarphoji (1798-1831). It narrates the whole history of the Maratha kingdom of Tanjavur. Sardesai (1933) holds that 'such a large historical inscription is nowhere else to be found in the whole world'. Rajwade (1906) and Sambamurti Rao (1907) have, published the text of the inscription. In 1985 we compared the texts with the original inscription. The comparison showed that both the texts are not perfect copies of the original inscription. A comparison of the first two stone-pieces reveals the following :

(Note : Words on the left hand side are in the inscription; words on the right hand side are in Rajawade's (1906) copy. For formal comparison transliteration is used where necessary.)

a) Rajawade's addition of *anuswāra :*

त्यास > त्यांस, विशेषे > विशेषें, प्रसादवाक्याचे, > प्रसादवाक्याचें, समुद्री > समुद्रीं, स्वप्नात > स्वप्नांत, पुण्यप्रभावे > पुण्यप्रभावें, दिल्हे > दिल्हें, सवेच > सवेंच, असता > असतां, पुत्रापैकी > पुत्रापैकीं, देणे > देणें, बिरुदे > बिरुदें

On the other hand there are two forms in which Rajwade deletes the *anuswāra :*

देवकराकडें > देवकराकडे, पंन्नास > पन्नास

b) The distinction between [i] इ and [i :] ई and [u] उ and [u:] ऊ which is maintained only occasionally in careful speech or word-dictation is shown in orthography by symbols such as ि, ी, ु, ू respectively. Rajawade often makes changes in this as well :

संततिसंपत्ति > संततीसंपत्ति, विभूतीरुद्राक्ष > विभूतिरुद्राक्ष, मूर्ति > मूर्ती, उपरि > उपरी, पूजिते > पूजिते, होउन > होऊन, घेउन > घेऊन, सामादिक > सामादीक

c) Similarly the distinction between अ [a] and आ [a:] is changed by Rajwade. The orthographic marker for आ after consonants is ा.

जाहगीर > जाहागीर, माहाराज > महाराज, अपली > आपली, अपल्यास > आपल्यास, अपण > आपण

d) Some letters in the inscription are different from those used by Rajwade : (They are Modi-letters)

भ > भ, ण > ण, श्रू > श्रू

e) The main difference lies in the forms of words in the inscription and those in Rajwade's copy. A few examples in the first two stone-pieces are the following :

sadharmayuktavihita > swadharmayuktavihita, kitteka > kityeka, jālā > jhāla, sārvakāḷa > sārvakāla, mahāsena > mahāśena, jāle > jāhale, ādnyevarūna > ādnyekaḍūn, śūratwākaḍūna > śūratwekaḍūna, yutdhāsa > yuddhāsa, yekaśivarājā > ekśivarājā, mhaṇāra > mhaṇṇāra, gharāṇe > gharāṇa, vari > var, lihile > lihilele, peśawyāce > peśavāce, tyāca rīfī > yāca rīfī.

II

If one compares the text of the inscription with Modern Marathi, at word-level one finds two differences in their forms.

II.1. Some forms are written by following different orthographic conventions. The following are some examples :

1. आश्रा > आसरा, 2. सिव्हासन > सिंहासन,

3. रुप्पेरी > रुपेरी, 4. थोर्ला > थोरला, 5. सर्कार > सरकार, 6. नंगीसंशेर > नंगीसमशेर, 7. रुस्तुंखान > रुस्तुमखान

(Note: In all the following sections the left-hand side citations are from the inscription; the right hand side forms are used in Modern Marathi).

One can easily see that the writing in the inscription here is trying to be more faithful to pronunciations than it is in conventional orthographic manner.

(Note: Phonemic transcription is given in square-brackets :)

II.2. By reading the inscription one can feel the differences in the phonological forms of some of the words :

1. [uṇṭha] > [uṇṭa],
2. [yadalša:ha:] > [a:dilša:ha:],
3. [kumuk] > [kumak],
4. [yočana:] > [yoǰana:],
5. [ma:ghle] > [ma:gle],
6. [turuk] > [turka],
7. [mhara:ṭa:] > [mara:ṭha:],
8. [khuraniši] > [kurnisa:t],
9. [agodharī] > [agodar],
10. [dilhe] > [dile],
11. [khattal] > [kattal],
12. [druṣṭha:nta] > [druṣṭa:nta],
13. [anubhog] > [anubhav],

Aspiration (cf. no 1, 5, 7, 8, 12), thus, seems to be more predominant in Tanjavuri Marathi.

II.3. In the inscription one finds different types of compounds. Sanskrit compounds are either borrowed *(tatsama)* or borrowed and modified *(tadbhava)*

(a) **Tatsama :**

[ǰaṭharasamudra] 'ocean in the form of stomach'
[putrotsava] 'celebration on the occasion of a son's birth'
[vibhu:tirudra:kša:laṇkruta] 'adorned with special beads and holy ashes'

(b) **Tatbhava :**

[da:ǐja] 'kinsman'
[daḷabha:r] 'army'
[riṇa:nubandha] 'friendly relation.'

Some compounds are borrowed from Arabic or Persian as well :

(c) **Tatsama :**

[tophkha:na:] 'a place of cannon stores'
[šaha:majku:r] 'the above-mentioned respectable person'
[ra:jemajku:r] 'the above-mentioned king'
[dudhaḍ] 'body divided into two parts—head and trunk'

(d) **Tatbhava :**

[hišobkitob] 'accounts'
[ja:bsva:l] 'questions and answers'
[ha:rka:rya:] 'messenger'

The rest can be classified according to the languages from which the members are borrowed :

(e) **Sanskrit + Persian :**

[na:ma:niša:] 'a list of names'

(f) **Marathi + Marathi :**

[soneru:pe] 'gold and silver'
[raḍatoṇḍi:] 'a woman who always complaints'
[vaḍi:lbha:u:] 'elder brother'

(g) **Marathi + Sanskrit :**

[phula:kruti:] 'a design of flowers'
[gaḍapraveš] 'ceremony of entering a castle'
[pa:ydaḷ] 'infantry'

(h) **Persian + Sanskrit :**

[sva:rastom] 'group of horsemen'
[ruǰuma:rga] 'proper way'

(i) **Persian + Marathi :**

[diva:ṇva:ḍa:] 'royal hall'
[haraupa:y] 'each remedy'

II.4. In addition to the compounds mentioned in II.1 one finds compounds in the inscription that may be called 'semantic reduplications' as both the members in the words mean the same. One can call them 'repetitive

compounds'.
[sa:mbašiva] 'Lord Shiva'
[šivašambhu:] 'Lord Shiva'
[putrasanta:n] 'heir, son'
[a:darma:n] 'respect'

II.5.
(a) If we consider the quasi-modals (v1 + v2) in the inscription, we find that the choice of v1 is different. For example, the following v1 + v2 constructions are not used in Modern Marathi :
[ca:lvi:t a:le] > [ca:lavle] 'kept on, continued'
[hou:n hote] > [hote] 'were'
(b) On the other hand there are many verb-phrases in the inscription that have the form Compliment + Verb and that are not used in Modern Marathi. The following are some examples :

[kumuk kar]	:	'help'
[khya:ti: kar]	:	'be famous'
[marya:da: karav]	:	'honour'
[snehit ho]	:	'be friendly'
[sva:dhi:n a:ṇ]	:	'capture'
[da:ṭa: de]	:	'pressurise'
[taktaniši: kar]	:	'corronate'
[devi: da:khav]	:	'have small pox'
[prattyakša ho]	:	'present onself'
[para:ǰay de]	:	'defeat'
[raṇa:s ye]	:	'die on the battlefield'
[miḷu:n as]	:	'be friendly'

(c) There are cases where a single verb is used in place of a Complement + Verb construction in Modern Marathi:
[sthir] > [sthira ho] 'settle'
[ma:gha:r] > [magha:r ghe] 'recede'
[nirop] > [nirop de] 'send a message'
[vista:rav] > [vista:r kar] 'expand'

II.6. The inscription shows differences in gender and number as well.
[birude aŋgika:rle] (m.pl.) > [birude aŋgika:rli:] (n.pl.)
'accepted gifts'
[pa:c vastu: dilhe] (m.pl.) > [pa:c vastu: dilya:] (f.pl.)
'gave five things'
[mašida:] (f.pl.) > (mašidi:) [f.pl.]
'mosques'
The noun belongs to [gha:r] class not to [ma:ḷ] class.
[a:mce na:ve] (m.pl.) > [a:mči: na:ve] (n.pl)
'our names'

III

The vocabulary items in the inscription are interesting from the point of view of semantics as well.

III.1. One can see borrowings from Sanskrit and Persian. In the case of Sanskrit words there are two tendencies :
(a) Sanskrit words are used in order to make the style prestigious :
[vikalpa] 'opposition' [prešit] 'one commissioned'
[antaraŋgekaḍu:n] 'whole-heartedly'
[nirva:ṇ yuddha] 'the final battle'
[janita:] 'father'
(b) Many Marathi place-names and personal names are translated into Sanskrit :
[ta:mbramukhi:] > [mogal] 'Mogul'
[birdali:pura] > [bidlar] 'Bidar'
[alagiri: ba:dašaha:] > [auraŋgāǰeb ba:dašaha:] 'Aurangazeb'
[ša:mavakra] > [habaši:] 'an Abyssinian'
(c) There are borrowings from Arabic and Persian as well :
[jileb] 'procession', [nava:r] 'cord'
[kaldara:] 'silk and cotten stuff', [sadar] 'seat for the administration of justice'
[kataba:] 'affidavit'
[taraph] 'side', [galeph] 'pillow-cover'
(d) Since the inscription is in Tamil Nadu and since the Maratha rulers were ruling over the Tamil speakers, the influence of the local language is expected. Surprisingly, one does not find any Tamil vocabulary items used in the inscription. It may be so because the inscription language was highly stylised.

(e) Words are borrowed from English though their forms are modified :
[puna:] 'Poona'
[kumpani:] 'Company', [gaunar] : 'governor'
[resiḍenṭi] 'residency', [gavarnmenṭ] : 'government'
[ha:narbil] 'honourable', [triṭi:] 'treaty'
(f) There are attempts at coining words such as
[ma:na:i:] 'significance'
[a:dhikyata:] 'abundance'
[udaṇḍada:] 'many times'
(g) Some words in the inscription sound archaic in Modern Marathi :
[mhaṇṇa:r] > [mhaṇu:n] 'called'
[karita:] 'for that matter'
[kaḍu:n] > [muḷe] 'because of'
[ka:ḍhṇi:] 'rope', [da:ṭaṇ] 'crowdedness'
[paḍa:u:] 'defeated', [varkaḍ] 'remaining'
[ja:ṇavṇe] 'tell'
[vijṇa:] 'fan'
[partu:n] > [parat] 'again'
[nava:yi:t] > [navi:n] 'new'
[pa:vatori] > [pa:vato tovari] 'by the time (he) reached'
[surat lih] 'draw a picture'
[tuk] 'escape'
[bhuḷṭa:] 'ear of corn from which the corn is removed'
[ṣirṇi:] 'a kind of head-cover'

III.2. There are some cases of meaning changes (meaning extension and meaning contraction) :

a) Tanjavur Marathi	Modern Marathi
[kannya:] 'unmarried daughter'	'daughter'
[bha:ṇḍaṇe] 'to fight a battle'	'to quarrel'
[kitta:] 'way, pattern'	'piece of writing for practice'
[khya:ti] 'information'	'fame'
[vyasan] 'sorrow, difficult time'	'addiction'
[stri:] 'wife'	'wife; woman'

References

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